



German Presidency of the Council of the European Union

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EU Statement in response to the UNSG's Special
Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo,
H.E. President Martti Ahtisaari

The European Union warmly welcomes the UN Secretary General's Special Envoy for the Future Status Process for Kosovo, President Martti Ahtisaari, back to the Permanent Council and thanks him for his comprehensive briefing.

The European Union fully supports the UN Special Envoy Martti Ahtisaari and his efforts in conducting the political process to determine Kosovo's future status. His proposals presented to both parties on 2 February provide comprehensive arrangements designed to promote in Kosovo a multi-ethnic and democratic society based on the rule of law. They include extensive measures to safeguard the future of all communities living in Kosovo, especially the Kosovo Serbs.

The European Union believes that the proposals create the basis for Kosovo's sustainable economic and political development and for strengthening the stability of the entire region. The proposals represent the result of one year of intensive negotiations including direct talks between the two sides. The status process has now entered its decisive stage. The European Union welcomes Martti Ahtisaari's intention to engage the parties in a period of intensive consultations with a view to achieving further progress in a spirit of compromise on the basis of his proposals. It strongly urges Belgrade and Pristina to participate actively and constructively in these consultations, which are scheduled to start tomorrow here in Vienna.

The EU stands ready to play a significant role in the implementation of the status settlement. The final decision on the status of Kosovo should be endorsed by the UN Security Council. On 12 February the Council of the European Union decided to intensify the preparation for a future EU and international presence in Kosovo in coordination with other international actors.

In this respect, we especially value the essential work done by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo through its headquarters in Pristina as well as its broad field presence. We see the OSCE as continuing to play an important role in the support of a peaceful, democratic and multi-ethnic Kosovo with full respect of the Rule of Law and the highest level of internationally recognised human rights and fundamental freedoms. We support the mission's newly established structure, open to further adjustment, which will enable it to perform its future role in Kosovo effectively. The EU also considers it essential that the EU and OSCE continue to coordinate their work closely and ensure a seamless exchange of information in order to reinforce each others' efforts.

Mr. Chairman, in conclusion we should like to wish President Ahtisaari and his team all success in the challenging weeks to come.

The Candidate Countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia*, the Countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, as well as EFTA country Iceland, a member of the European Economic Area, align themselves with this statement.

* Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia continue to be part of the Stabilisation and Association Process.